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DAKOTA HAVENER and Devon Nazarchuk tell the story of Lt. Col. John McCrae, shown behind them.

Chamber gearing up for Extravaganza, Shop Local

VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

The Elk Point Chamber of Commerce Christmas Extravaganza Committee unveiled their plans for the Friday, Nov. 29 Christmas Extravaganza, which will kick off Shop Local Week, Nov. 29 to Dec. 7, in Elk Point.

Shoppers will have all day and evening on Nov. 29 to collect draw slips when they make a purchase at participating local businesses and to deposit them in the big red draw drum at Cornerstone Co-op for a major prize draw that will be made at 9 p.m. that evening, following the Winter Wonderland Parade, shopping for Extravaganza specials, stopping in to enjoy cotton candy and hot dogs at the Eco Centre, taking the kids to the nearby bale maze and munching barbecued burgers and sipping hot chocolate as they warm up around the downtown bonfire.

Shop Local Week will offer the opportunity to add more entries to the draw drum as shoppers seek out those perfect gifts and all the ingredients for their Christmas baking and dinner menu. There will be special events each day as well, starting off with the F. G. Miller High School's annual Craft Show and Book Fair on Saturday, Nov. 30, and Photos with Santa at Co-op on Sunday afternoon, and wrapping up with a peek at the best antlers south of Santa's reindeer at the Oilmen's Association's Big Bucks Competition on Saturday, Dec. 7, just before the draws are made for a wide range of donated merchandise prizes. Further details will be announced as events and prizes are confirmed.

It was agreed that both member and non-member businesses will be welcome to participate in Extravaganza and Shop Local Week.

(Continued on Page 5)

F. G. Miller staff and students pause to remember

VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

Students and staff of F. G. Miller High School paid tribute to the men and women who have served in Canada's military over the past 105 years at a solemn ceremony on Thursday, remembering those who left their homes to do battle in lands far away, some of them not surviving to return home to their families.

Dakota Havener and Devon Nazarchuk led the program, with social studies teacher Brittany Norton opening the event by reminding students how fortunate we are to live in Canada.

"We are able to enjoy our lives peacefully and with many more freedoms than those living in other countries in our world. We are able to enjoy these freedoms because of the sacrifices of those who came before us and the ongoing sacrifices of those currently enlisted in our military. It is sometimes easy to forget what has happened in the past, as we move about our busy lives at school and work. So I urge you to take this morning's ceremony to really take time and think about those who have served and those who have sacrificed their lives, and those who have lost spouses, friends, siblings and parents due to these sacrifices... They were willing to die to protect us, and some did... the least that we can do is give them a half hour of our time today."

(Continued on Page 2)

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GRADE 8 STUDENTS Brooklyn DeVries and Joshua Smith add their poppies to the wreath at F. G. Miller's Remembrance Day ceremony.

PROUD CANADIANS - Ethan Hampson accompanies Josh Ashoalu in the singing of O Canada.

ARMY CADET Vidit Patel and veteran Ian Holland-Hughes placed poppies on behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Denise Bjorkman and Vicki Brooker photos

FGM tribute

(Continued from Front Page)

Josh Ashoalu sang 'O Canada', accompanied by Ethan Hampson on guitar.

In World War I, which began in Europe in 1914, and soon involved both Britain and Canada, Devon noted that, "For a nation of eight million people, Canada's war effort was remarkable. More than 650,000 men and women from Canada and Newfoundland served, over 66,000 gave their lives and more than 172,000 were wounded." He quoted Lt. Col. John McCrae, a doctor in the trenches during the Battle of Ypres, of telling his mother in a letter to home, "The general impression in my mind is of a nightmare. We have been in the most bitter of fights… gunfire and rifle fire never ceased for 60 seconds ... And behind it all was the constant background of the sights of the dead, the wounded, the maimed, and a terrible anxiety lest the line should give way."

Dakota continued McCrae's story, telling the students that the day before he wrote his famous poem, 'In Flanders Fields', one of his closest friends was killed in the fighting and buried in a makeshift grave with a simple wooden cross, in a field where wild poppies blew in the wind. "Unable to help his friend or any of the others who had died, John McCrae gave them a voice through his poem," she concluded before calling Liam Ludlage forward to recite the classic words.

While World War I was supposed to be the war to end all wars, World War II began in September of 1939, and more than a million Canadians and Newfoundlanders joined the military, serving in Dieppe, Normandy and Hong Kong. Approximately 45,000 gave their lives and another 55,000 were wounded before the war came to an end in August 1945.

Elisha Sears read an excerpt from the journal of Lt. R. Azzie, written Feb. 2, 1945, saying, "The sky is being shredded and the earth is opening up all around—what a clamor! Thunder! Shredding! This is war, and I am finally at the front… even though terror sometimes grips us and brings us to our knees, I want to stay. I want to avenge those who fall at my side. I feel the need to continue as long as God will allow it."

Since World War 2, Canada has been involved in Korea, Afghanistan and several peacekeeping missions. A video showing scenes ranging from the foxholes and trenches of World War 1 to the beaches of the D-Day invasion to today's peacekeepers in action was shown before students Owen Hampson and Ella Ballas, Grade 7, Army Cadet Joshua Smith and Brooklyn de Vries, Grade 8, Nathaniel Cousins and Elisha Sears, Grade 9, Ethan Hampson and Mackenna Rose, Grade 10, Mykaela Verenka and Jake Germaine, Grade 11 and Colton MacLean and Rhianna Bjorkman, Grade 12, teachers Kevin Casper and Brittany Norton, military veteran Ian Holland-Hughes, and Army Cadet Vidit Patel came forward to place poppies on the commemorative wreath as 'Veteran's Hallelujah' played in the background.

Dakota gave a reading on the importance of remembering by author Heather Robertson, stating, "They died for Canada. The meaning of their sacrifice rests with our collective national consciousness; our future is their monument."

Nicole Gormley then came forward to lead the assembly through the Act of Remembrance, which was followed by the Last Post, minutes of silence and Reveille, and invited all to join her in saying the Commitment to Remember:

They were young as we were young,
They served, giving freely of themselves.
To them, we pledge,
Amid the winds of time,
To carry their torch and never forget.
We will remember them.

In closing, Dakota thanked the audience for their reverence throughout the ceremony.

WAR STORY - Elisha Sears read an excerpt from a soldier's journal, telling of the harsh reality he faced on the World War II

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE - Nicole Gormley (above) led the students in the Commitment To Remember,Earlier in the program, Liam Ludlage recited the World War I poem, In Flanders Fields.

Chamber

(Continued from Front Page)

Tourism was another main topic of last week's chamber agenda, with president Terri Hampson reporting on joint tourism initiatives taking place in northeast Alberta, with one group in Cold Lake and Lac La Biche already underway and another that includes the Town of Elk Point, Town and County of St. Paul, the chambers of both towns and Alberta's Lakeland Destination Marketing Organization. It's also time to determine what will go in the tourist publications distributed by Lakeland and Go East of Edmonton. The chamber will approach town council regarding sharing the cost of advertising in the Go East publication, as was done last year.

This year's Scarecrow Competition only drew three entries, Hampson said, "and we may need to change it up for next year." The suggestion was made that it also include Halloween decorations. This year's winners were Signatures Collision and Frame, Givens LLP and Elk Point Outreach School.

Town of Elk Point CAO Ken Gwozdz reported on the Oct. 24 Economic Development Committee (EDC) discussion regarding the importance of the Elk Point Airport. The terminal is undergoing some upgrades, and will now have a log book where the weather and runway conditions will be noted twice daily for the information of incoming aircraft, with pilots phoning in to get the information. It was noted that the airport is not equipped with GPS, which aircraft would need to land here if there is fog, and that the airport is "Crucial to the community."

Later in the meeting, Gwozdz passed around the results of the recent storm water study that showed a number of areas of concern, and said the town has "things to fix. Infrastructure is very important, and what's in the ground is what does the job" of dealing with storm water.

Realtor Shirley Harms sits on the EDC and feels it is "a good committee; its overall thought is attracting residents and businesses to the community." The committee has "lots of resources" and is geared toward ensuring that Elk Point "is a healthy community to come to. Attracting businesses is really critical."

Recognizing outstanding existing businesses is another important aspect, and Hampson introduced the topic of presenting business of the year awards, probably during Small Business Week. This was once a regular event for the chamber, but has not been carried out in recent years. Members agreed to plan for this in 2020, and possibly to include categories for home based and new businesses, as well as businesses employing under and over 10 employees.

The Chamber of Commerce bulletin board beside Knotty Boyz has recently been repaired, and will be repainted when warmer weather arrives. Hampson suggested that the chamber might need an updated logo to promote its identity, and asked members, "Do we want a design contest?' The contest will run with the stipulation that a winner will only be declared if a suitable logo is submitted.

The next two chamber meetings will be delayed by one week, with December's meeting moved to Dec. 11, in order to compile the results from Extravaganza and Shop Local Week, and the January meeting will be held Jan. 8, as the first Wednesday falls on New Year's day.

AWARD WINNING CHAMBER MEMBERS - Sandy and Tammy Robb of Golden Loaf Bakery were congratulated by Elk Point and District Chamber of Commerce president Terri Hampson on their win as the Alberta winner in the Full Line Bakery category in the Sweetest Bakery in Canada contest.

Life gets even sweeter for Robbs with Alberta-wide win

VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

It doesn't get much sweeter than this. As news spread quickly of the Golden Loaf Bakery's designation as the Alberta winner in the Full Like Bakery category of the Sweetest Bakery in Canada contest, congratulations poured in from across the community last week.

"I've been interviewed twice on the radio this morning," Tammy Robb told Elk Point Chamber of Commerce president Terri Hampson when she stopped by to present a congratulatory certificate, as she called husband and business partner Sandy away from his dough duties for a quick photo.

The Robbs have operated the bakery for the past 16 years, and are grateful for all the support they have received from "an amazing community" through the years and during the voting process, which this year was totally on line, no longer including the opportunity to enter in person in the store.

Another full-line bakery, Doohe's Bakery in Campbellford Ontario, was the national winner for a second year in a row. Campbellford is a small town of roughly 3,473 people and like Elk Point, is located on the Trans Canada Trail.

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EDITORIAL

Weather permitting

It's that time of year again when the weather is notoriously unpredictable. We saw a cartoon of the Cat in the Hat the other day that said, "Will it rain? Will it snow? I'm from Alberta. I do not know!" and that is about the way we all feel, after Friday's unexpected bout of freezing rain sent most of northeast Alberta into a spin - quite literally in many cases.

Through the winter months, many events take place that require us to be there, but there are occasions when it is not safe to be out on the roads. Please note that if this is the case, there may not be a reporter on hand for your event. You will, of course, be welcome to take and submit photos as well as a summary of your event.

The same goes for plans for the upcoming Christmas Extravaganza. As all of you who have been around for a number of years, that day can bring any kind of weather whatsoever, from snow-melting chinooks that halted snowshoe races in their tracks to heavy snowfalls that have cancelled the wagon rides, back in the days when horse-drawn wagons were on the schedule. We all hope for the best, but it is impossible to predict the weather at the end of November, any more than it is for July 1, when heavy downpours sent all the Canada Day afternoon activities indoors.

Let's all remember, the weather dictates our activities. Stay warm, drive safely, and if you don't have your winter ties on yet, make that appointment today.

STAY SAFE

RCMP reminder: don't leave vehicle idling and unoccupied

Alberta RCMP remind drivers not to leave their vehicles idling while unoccupied. When the temperature drops, police see an increase in stolen vehicle incidents while leaving them unoccupied.

Alberta RCMP have estimated that about 33% of all vehicle thefts occurred while the vehicle was idling and unoccupied. Vehicle thefts of this kind are crimes of opportunity and are completely preventable.

RCMP have the following safety tips to keep your vehicle secure, not only in the winter but the warmer months as well:

· Never leave an idling vehicle unoccupied, even when it is locked.

· Use a remote starter whenever possible and keep your vehicle locked.

· Use a steering wheel lock to deter thieves.

· Never leave spare keys or garage door openers in or around your vehicle.

· Never leave children or pets in an idling vehicle.

· Report suspicious activity to police immediately by calling your local police detachment.

Many people believe that their vehicle isn't going to be stolen because they live on a quiet street or are only leaving it unattended for a minute. In reality, it only takes second for someone to get into the vehicle and drive away. Stolen vehicles pose a significant risk to public safety and we need the community's help to prevent these easy thefts.

WAY BACK WHEN...

Remembrance Day, Business of the Year, new mayor, old tradition

HERE'S THE NEWS THAT MADE THE HEADLINES OF THE LAKELAND REVIEW AND THE ELK POINT REVIEW FOR THE WEEK OF NOV. 12 IN...

1984

A large group commemorated those who gave their lives for peace on Remembrance Day, with Ada Scott laying the wreath on behalf of the mothers of servicemen at the snow-covered cenotaph.. Elk Point Elks won their first home game of the Centennial League 'season on Remembrance Day,winninf 8-3 over Kehewin Voyageurs, a World War Three battle sending five players to the dressing room with game misconduct and match penalties.

1989

A sizeable parade followed RCMP Cst. L. Stockley, drummer Jason Morris and Cadets Dennis Jasinsky and Terry Wakaruk of RCCSC Arrowhead, St. Paul, down the three-block route past a reviewing stand at the Elk Point Post Office and on to the cenotaph for Remembrance Day observances. Beaver River Member of Parliament Deborah Grey received c input on subjects ranging from free trade and the GST to elected senators from constituents at an open house that packed the Further Education building to capacity.

1994

Elk Point lost its ambulance service after 11 years, when Elk Point and District Ambulance owner Fred Lambright visited town council to report that due to tremendous cutbacks in the healthcare system, he could no longer continue operating, with only four local calls in October, but said his ambulance based in Tulliby Lake and serving Frog Lake, Fishing Lake, Onion Lake and Heinsburg was self-supporting and would continue. Mayor Ed Buck swore in new town councillors Louis Verhagen, Ron Smith and Dave Yake at the town's annual organizational meeting.

1999

One of Elk Point's newest businesses, Stems N Stuff, operated by Manon Joice, earned eight of the 25 nominations for the chamber of commerce Business of the Year award, with 10 other businesses also nominated for the honour. Two elderly Elk Point residents were injured when their vehicle went between barriers nosedived into an excavation.

2004

Elk Point's new and optimistic Mayor Parrish Tung, new councillors Dwayne Yaremkevich and Thomas Kondla, re-elected councillors Alvina Schuhmacher and Dennis Jasinsky, town manager Myron Goyan and his office staff and public works superintendent Ron Fraess held a meet-and-greet town hall meeting, which also served as an opportunity to get to know newly arrived Dr. Ayobami Oyebode. Tiger's Pride became a strong and vital part of Elk Point Elementary School, with principal Lorne Young noting, "We don't want to just do things right, but also to do the right things."

2009

Economic development coordinator Bob Bezpalko returned from the Tourism Industry of Alberta conferences filled with enthusiasm about the role the new Visitor Information Centre would play in the community and setting a goal of having information on every business in town available at the EcoCentre. It was the end of an era at the Windsor Salt Company's community of Riverview was the scene of a garage sale of all its contents, as area residents said a sad farewell to the scene of decades of enjoyable recreation.

2014

Plans for the Nov. 28 Christmas Extravaganza topped the agenda at the Elk Point Chamber of Commerce meeting, with many details of the event checked off the organizers' to-do list. Sixteen members of F. G. Miller High School's Class of 2015 hosted Remembrance Day observances for the entire student body, carrying on a long-standing tradition at the school, whose namesake, Dr. F. G. Miller, served in the Army medical corps in both World War I and World War II.

The Elk Point Review publishes a variety of opinions as a contribution to debate on matters of public concern. Unsigned editorials express the view of this newspaper's editorial board which includes the Publisher and the Editor. Signed pieces express the view of the individual writer.

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Government affirms stable funding for libraries

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The Alberta government is ensuring libraries remain strong community and learning hubs by maintaining the highest level of direct funding for library boards in the country.

This funding will allow libraries to continue delivering important library services to Albertans, including job-seeking assistance, language-learning, and support for people with print disabilities.

"Our libraries are vital community and learning hubs that support local programs while bringing families and neighbours together. Libraries are essential to our strong quality of life in Alberta and I am proud to support them," says Kaycee Madu, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Government will invest $37 million into Alberta's public libraries this year.

Compared to other provinces with similar library delivery structures, Alberta provides the highest level of direct funding to public library boards and through provincial network initiatives such as SuperNet connectivity and interlibrary loan support.

Library funding will remain the same as in 2018-2019, with $31 million going directly to library boards and another $6 million in network support.

There are 322 libraries across the province.

At least 1.4 million Albertans have a library card. More than 21 million physical and virtual library visits happen across Alberta each year.

ELK POINT ROYAL PURPLE made a sizeable donation to the Elk Point Elementary School's Breakfast Program last week. Vice principal Leanne Vinge accepted the cheque from Honored Royal Lady Vicki Brooker, secretary Verna Lazicki and treasurer RubyAnn Kittlitz, along with offers to volunteer some time to assist with the daily breakfast program. The local Royal Purple lodge was happy to assist with the long-running volunteer program, and agreed that well nourished students are better learners.

Wendy Young photo

New rural crime plan protects victims, gives officers more responsibilities

RUSHANTHI KESUNATHAN
Review Contributor

The provincial government has a new plan to combat rural crime, which aims to give victims a stronger voice and act on other concerns brought up by rural residents.

"We are sending a strong signal to rural Albertans who have been victimized for far too long. We have listened to you. We have heard you," Justice Minister Doug Schweitzer said in a Nov. 6 media release. "And we are standing with you. We want to ensure you know that we are going to do everything we can as a provincial government to help you feel safe in your communities."

Schweitzer has been touring the province since September, speaking with rural residents in a string of rural crime town halls. On Oct. 29, the minister was in St. Paul listening to concerns.

Town of St. Paul Mayor Maureen Miller calls the initiative a very big step.

"It's more movement than we have seen in the past. It's important that the government acts swiftly in this matter, but it's equally important that they don't rush it until all the consequences of their decisions are known," Miller said. "I believe the government has listened and it appears they are responding as they said they would. I thank Minister Doug Schweitzer and MLA David Hanson for making it possible for our voices to be heard."

In order to reduce response times, the government is expanding the roles of 400 peace officers, such as Alberta sheriffs, fish and wildlife officers and commercial vehicle enforcement officers. Training for the new Rural Alberta Provincial Integrated Defence Force – the RAPID Force, is currently underway. The first of these officers will be available to assist rural residents by fall 2020, according to the release.

The province is also increasing fines, with possible jail time, for trespassers. The planned legislation includes a proposed five-fold increase to the maximum fines for trespassing offences, with fines of up to $10,000 for a first violation and $25,000 for subsequent offences, as well as possible prison time of up to six months, according to the release.

The government is also introducing changes to the Occupiers' Liability Act, in attempt of strengthening property rights. The changes would prevent offenders from suing property owners. This provision will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2018.

Additionally, the government has proclaimed the Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act to deter metal theft, such as copper-wire, a thieves' favourite. By doing so, it becomes difficult for criminals to monetize stolen material by selling it for scrap.

The Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act was passed in 2012, but never proclaimed. The legislation came into effect Nov. 5.

The new regulations, which will ensure dealers and recyclers obtain proof of identification from sellers, record and retain details of transactions and share information with law enforcement, come into play by spring 2020. Scrap metal dealers and recyclers are also required to report any suspected stolen property in their possession to authorities.

"In many ways, rural communities are the heart of this province – hard-working, salt-of-the-earth, and always ready and willing to lend a hand to a neighbour in need," Environment and Parks Minister Jason Nixon said in the media release. "It's heartbreaking to see the scourge of criminal activity worsen in these communities over the past several years, and we need to take action."

A new program will enable communities to take part in the sentencing of offenders by letting them submit a statement describing how the crime has affected the community as a whole – including the emotional, physical and economic impact, or fears they may have for their own security, according to the release.

Community impact statement forms will be available online in early January.

A new Restitution Recoveries Program will help victims collect outstanding payments on restitution orders by allowing the government to use enforcement measures against offenders. This would include garnishing wages or seizing and selling property, as needed, to cover payments.

Make your coffee break count

Just a reminder that the Elk Point Municipal Library's annual Alzheimer's Coffee Break in support of the Alzheimer's Society in our area is coming up tomorrow, Wednesday, Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Stop by and enjoy a cup of London Fog, Vanilla Coconut Latte, White Chocolate Latte or plain everyday coffee - or Earl Grey tea, and an array of goodies. This is also the November Library Tea.

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LARA happy government will support research

JANICE HUSER
Review Contributor

The Lakeland Agricultural Research Association is among the organizations that will continue to receive support from the provincial government. Members of the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta will have access to increased funding, while core funding for agricultural societies will be maintained.

"We are very excited that the Government of Alberta is continuing to support agricultural research across Alberta," says Kellie Nichiporik, Environmental Program Manager with Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA).

LARA is a producer lead group that serves agricultural producers in the Municipal District of Bonnyville, County of Smoky Lake, County of St. Paul and Lac La Biche County.

"We constantly look for feedback from our farmers as to how our research can best assist them and how we can make that knowledge accessible to them. Local research is very important for producers to help select the varieties of crops to grow in this area, as well as look at new practices such as ultra-early seeding, researching new crops such as quinoa, extended grazing options and soil amendments such as lime to adjust the soil pH," said Nichiporik, in an email with the St. Paul Journal.

"We also focus on the environment and sustainable farming practices such as cover crops. We are looking forward to further engagement with our producers to identify priorities and apply to the CAP program for research funding for new projects."

In a media release sent out on Thursday, the province said it "is fulfilling its commitment to make sure agricultural research is led by farmers, not government." The government is setting aside $2 million specifically for research.

In the coming months, engagements will take place with farmers to determine research priorities, and programs will be built to support them.

"In the meantime, government is reducing red tape and streamlining how government-led research is delivered," reads the media release.

Agricultural Societies were also mentioned in the release, and core funding for the non-profit organizations is being maintained at $11.5 million per year.

Agricultural societies operate more than 700 facilities across the province, including hockey rinks, curling rinks, community halls and facilities that serve rodeos and fairs, farmers markets, 4-H activities, agriculture and farm safety education.

In the area, ag societies operate facilities in St. Paul, Mallaig, Elk Point and Ashmont.

"Alberta's agricultural societies and the facilities, programs and events they operate are essential to a high quality of life for Albertans. Government's commitment for support provides leadership and confidence that societies can continue to do important work in their communities," said Tim Carson, CEO, Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies.

The media release focused on a variety of rural topics.

Irrigation districts were also mentioned, with the government announcing it will invest $48 million over four years, with $14 million in 2019-20, for irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation projects.

Funding for rural utilities grants will also be maintained, according to the media release. The capital grant for rural utilities for 2019-20 will be $3.4 million (this includes rural electric and rural gas). And the Rural Gas Grant will increase by $2.45 million starting in 2021-22.

"For more than 50 years, our utilities have been helping to grow communities by providing natural gas as a source of heat and fuel. This government funding commitment helps us to be proactive, and continue to support rural economies and rural utility planning for Alberta's future," said Bert Paulssen, chair, Federation of Alberta Co-ops.

MLA David Hanson part of new caribou task force

RUSHANTHI KESUNATHAN
Review Contributor

Alberta's dwindling caribou population is getting three new task forces in an effort to support both a working landscape and caribou recovery.

MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul David Hanson will serve as one of the three MLAs on the task force. The three task forces have a total of 42 members. Dan Williams, MLA for Peace River, and Martin Long, MLA for West Yellowhead will join Hanson.

"It's an important role for our area and I'm happy to be appointed as the chair for the Cold Lake sub-region," Hanson said. "We had an introductory meeting (this week) but haven't got to the meat of the matter yet."

Members of the task forces include representatives of municipalities, indigenous communities, industry, recreational users and environmental non-government organization, according to a Nov. 4 government news release. The task force held its first meeting in Edmonton.

"We've got a very diverse group of people at the table to discuss from an industry, recreational and environmental standpoint," Hanson explained.

Environment and Parks Minister James Nixon says he has created three sub-regional task force teams to help the threatened caribou population recover.

"I'm happy to advance this important government platform commitment and work toward solutions that are practical, balanced and grounded in socio-economic analysis and respect for our land and biodiversity," Nixon said in the release.

Alberta is home to 15 caribou herds.

To begin, the task forces provide recommendations to government regarding sub-regional planning for Cold Lake, Bistcho Lake and Upper Smokey planning areas. This will address recovery outcomes for the Bistcho, Cold Lake, Redrock-Prairie Creek and Narraway caribou ranges.

The caribou sub-regional task forces will advise government regarding the sub-regional planning process to ensure local input is considered in the development of the draft plans; ensure that sub-regional plans, including caribou range plans, are subject to a comprehensive social, environmental and economic impact assessment; and review and consider the Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan (Dec. 2017) in the context of more holistic sub-regional planning, according to the release.

Recommendations for the Cold Lake sub-regional plan will be drafted by the end of March 2020, reads the release.

Following the completion of work in the three areas, the task forces will provide advice on the development of the remaining sub-regional plans and affected caribou ranges.

The creation of the sub-regional caribou task forces fulfills one of the Alberta government's election commitments to form a caribou range task force, according to provincial release.

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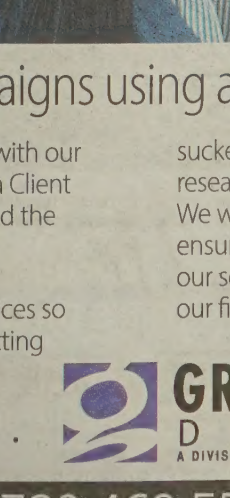

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Remembering Ray Croteau

ROBYNNE HENRY
Review Contributor

A local chuckwagon legend is being remembered for the contributions he made to the community and the sport he loved.

"He always looked out for others, and where he could help he would," explained his son Bert Croteau, following his father's passing.

While many knew Ray Croteau for his years spent competing in chuckwagon races, his history in Bonnyville goes back to the days when it was being settled.

"I think a lot of people know him for the wagon racing, but there was a lot more to him than that," noted Bert.

On Wednesday, Oct. 30, Croteau passed away peacefully at the age of 91.

His daughters, Jeanette Lange and Dianne Sylvestre, remember their father as a big man with a big heart.

"He was a man with huge hands. People who met him always said, 'it's like shaking hands with a shovel,'" Lange said.

Born and raised in Bonnyville, Croteau's parents were among the first families to settle in the area.

"At the museum, the Croteau original home is there. The little house and church are both his parents' generation, where seven or eight families were starting Bonnyville from scratch," Lange detailed.

Croteau was described as a jack of all trades. He was a lumberjack, a dairy and grain farmer, and a construction worker. At one time, he even operated a John Deere dealership in town.

He was an active member in the community, and was instrumental in the construction of the Agriplex and the first rodeo grounds.

"He always volunteered to put something of a pioneer nature in the parades for years," Lange recalled. "It had to do with the old-fashioned chuckwagons, the very old ones and he would participate that way."

Croteau's interest in adventure brought him to chuckwagons.

"He always loved racing," Bert said. "He started racing chariots with two horses back when we had the gymkhana club going. He did that, and he wanted to graduate to wagon racing. He did it part-time for a couple of years, and decided that was what he wanted to do."

He continued, "Back in the day, we'd hook up anything we had... If the neighbours had a horse and it could run, we had to try it out. Most of the time, they were just a runaway. There wasn't any thoroughbreds back in the day. There were a few, but we didn't have any until later on in the years."

Croteau's chuckwagon career began in 1967, mainly racing in the Northern Chuckwagon Racing Association.

Iron River-native chuckwagon racer Doug Irvine was an outrider for Croteau. Irvine remembers Croteau's love for horses, and that was an aspect that he admired about him.

"I know when he was racing, he was really good for the sport and encouraged every driver to get going. He was definitely a big part of our sport for a lot of years," he expressed.

His iconic rainbow wagon was well-known throughout the chuckwagon circuit, and he won a number of shows throughout the years. He competed in the Calgary Stampede from 1979 until his retirement in 1997 at the age of 69.

"They put the rule in to stop racing at 65 that year," Bert recalled.

Ed Wittchen, president of the World Professional Chuckwagon Association (WPCA), labelled Croteau as "a legend of the sport of chuckwagon racing."

"The legacy of his rainbow wagon impacted generations of fans and drivers from Bonnyville to Cheyenne Frontier Days, to the Calgary Stampede, among the many places he raced," he stated in an email. "He had a huge impact locally with his Action Barn facility and track where his fellow drivers and outriders, including his own family, were able to train and learn the sport."

Bert followed in his father's chuckwagon footsteps, and his son, Rae Croteau Jr., also took his spot behind the reins. In 2017, Rae retired and three generations took one more ride around the ag grounds in the rainbow wagon.

In honour of Croteau and everything he accomplished, the Bonnyville Pro Rodeo and Chuckwagon Association (BPRCA) named the local rodeo the Spirit of Bonnyville in 2018.

"The Spirit of Bonnyville reflects on Ray Croteau, and what he did for the community and wagon racing over the years," noted Jim Martineau, past president of the BPRCA.

Martineau described Croteau as "one of the veterans and developers of wagon racing in this part of the country."

"He was always a top competitor, and always a gentleman... He was a master at that trade, and I think he broke a lot of horses for other drivers. He helped a lot of drivers out, and he was a pioneer in the business," he added.

During tours, Sylvestre was always surprised by the amount of attention her father got.

"He had a lot of people who followed him, and I never understood back then how so many people could follow him from one show to the next. There was a lot of young fans, and I couldn't understand how they could follow an old guy."

Croteau was community-minded, and always tried to give back whenever he could.

"During the year of the Calgary Olympics, he went out to get a piece of the flame in Saskatchewan somewhere to bring it to the schools so that all the kids could light up from that flame. He was very patriotic. He loved this country, and the town he lived in," Lange expressed.

Irvine said, "He was definitely a great man, and an inspiration for all."

His seven children, 15 grandchildren, and 27 great-grandchildren will remember him as a man with a great sense of humour and a love for entertaining.

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